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BROADCASTERS' VICTORY COUNCIL

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300 NASSAU ST. PLAZA, NEW YORK, N. Y.

EXECUTIVE 2113

Number 6

March 10, 1942

THEY THINK WE CAN DO IT **

The fact that our government has appealed to the broadcasting industry for its full-throttle help in putting across the war production program with the American public is more than just an assignment. It's a vote of confidence. It's recognition that radio is the greatest means of mass communications in history. And it's the biggest, toughest job we've ever faced - a chance to justify our existence and at the same time safeguard our unique privileges of free kilocycles and free speech.

Broadcasters - most of them, anyhow - don't have to be jogged with repetitious warnings that this is serious business, that we must all pull together and that we have to use our facilities to the fullest in the national war effort. If you listen to the news each day, the headlines have brought all that stuff home to you with jaw-breaking finality.

It isn't just apathy or lukewarm co-operation that we should fear the most. Instead, it's those unconscious saboteurs called over-confidence, disorganization and misguided effort that are most likely to weaken the force of radio's efforts.

THIS IS WHAT WE CAN DO **

The objective is simply stated. Broadcasting has been called upon to sell the American people a supercharged program of war production. Our people are faced with a schedule of work that would tax a gleaming Superman in seven league boots. Radio has to get this realization inside the public's collective skull. Radio has to spur on, shame, shock, inspire, cajole and actually hammer this country into producing more tanks, planes, guns and a million unsung essentials than anyone ever thought could be produced in so little time.

How? Well, that's part of our job. The government can't lean back in its chair and say, "Boys, we've worked out an important program of work you can do for us. You'll go about it like this...." Washington isn't talking that way these days. First the government decides whether it has confidence in you. If you pass muster, it tells you what the results are it wants. You'll have to find the best means of getting them.

So first of all, let's not sit back with thumbs hooked in coat lapels and act smug. "Sure! We can sell anything. Did you see our net billings last year? Did you ever hear about the selling job we did for...." Radio has a way of being cocky. Probably a good thing, too. Probably accounts for much of radio's success.

But this job is so doggoned big that it ought to frighten you. Radio never had to sell anything so precious, so painfully necessary to the preservation of itself and its country. Let's go at this job intelligently and quite aware of its magnitude.

IT'S ON YOUR SHOULDERS **

We still haven't answered that question, "How?" The first step, we think, is to read over with care the war production speeches being made by Donald Nelson. They'll tell you with broad strokes just what is needed. Then use your head and your acquired skill as a broadcaster. The opening gun is to bring home to a public lulled by years of peace and its prosperity the understanding that this war is no Class B movie. The lights aren't going to flash on in a little while so that we can file out of the theater. It's grim, getting grimmer, and a time for action.

You must get across to the public that our immediate and only salvation lies in war production. Everything must be pointed toward stepping up that production to a tempo unmatched anywhere on the globe. The public must understand - and God knows it's a fantastic enough thought to grasp - that our way of life may pass. Its security is hinged upon the determination, the sweat, sacrifices and the spirit of the men and women of America. Radio can create that spirit - the rest will stem from it.

The Broadcasters Victory Council can't give you a neatly-lettered blueprint for meeting this job. We can only say that whatever you do to boost the speed of American war production, it's not enough. But the BVC does want to hear from you about the special programs, the ideas and the plans you hatch out.

Uncle Sam is the biggest, most important sponsor you ever had. Look upon this new request of his with the same enthusiasm you'd give a new client. Turn your program department inside-out to see that his sales message - the message that says the machines must turn faster - gets the best results your station can deliver.

We want to know what kind of sales job you've done for Uncle Sam. We want to know how you're going about it. This information can be passed along to the entire broadcasting industry. From it we hope we can formulate a universal blueprint which will guarantee radio's chances of doing what our government asks. We have its confidence. We can't let it down. And part of your obligation, frankly, is to let the BVC know how you're tackling the problem.

SOMEBODY SLIPPED, YOU SEE **

As we've chorused before - you can't be too careful. When Washington asks for something to be done in such-and-so a way - and particularly when it's a perfectly logical request - let's take a little care to see that the matter gets the horse-sense courtesy of proper attention. We're thinking at the moment of a talk made about ten days ago by Archibald McLeish, head of the OFF. It was a confidential talk that went out over the network

wiros so that broadcast executives could get a better picture of what was expected of them. Somebody pulled the wrong switch in one important Eastern city and several thousand FM listeners cocked puzzled ears at McLeish's words.

FOR NEWSMEN ONLY **

Captain Leland P. Lovette - he's assistant director, office of public relations for the Navy - will be giving a talk over those same network closed circuits next Saturday (March 14) from 1:45 to 2 p.m., EWT, which you shouldn't miss. Recently returned from Pearl Harbor, Captain Lovette is aiming his remarks at all newsmen. Not just radio newsmen or commentators. We suggest you pass the word among your local newspaper contemporaries and invite them up to the studio Saturday afternoon. BUT - the Navy has specifically requested that you exclude everyone except newsmen and station executives.

This - like the McLeish talk - is strictly entre nous. In other words, don't put it on the air, and see that your control men are wised up accordingly.

THE COUNCIL GROWS **

Appointed this week as a member of the hitherto five-man Broadcasters Victory Council was a sixth member - Walter J. Damm, manager of radio for The Milwaukee Journal (WTMJ and W55M). He represents FM Broadcasters, Inc., formerly represented by John Shepard, 3rd, chairman of the Council, who relinquished his post as FMBI president at the association's annual meeting in New York last week. Mr. Damm is the new head of FMBI.

THEY CAN USE YOUR HELP **

The Office of Civilian Defense - need we say? - has had its hands full getting the sympathy and support of many communities. It's unfortunate, of course, but rather inevitable. Civilian defense organizations had the same trouble securing co-operation in England - until the bombers came.

The OCD is counting on radio to make its problems easier and its acceptance by rugged American individualists come sooner. Radio can get the OCD's story to the community in efficient, plain words. Among OCD activities toward this end has been the organization of volunteer information committees in various communities. The BVC earnestly recommends that local radio men, so as to be of maximum service in matters of civilian defense, seek membership on these committees.

IT'S BETTER THIS WAY **

The Army Emergency Fund - whose *modus operandi* has been undecided for several weeks (see BVC Newsletter #3) - will not be asking broadcasters for campaign announcements. The Red Cross is absorbing this fund drive.

EVER THINK OF THIS ?**

Radio stations can do a lot more things than just broadcast programs and give news and air appeals to buy Defense Bonds. A good radio station goes quite a bit beyond filling those simple functions - particularly if it has any aspirations of being a force in its community. And the force of its influence is what radio needs most of all today in fulfilling its important work.

Why not give some thought to the creation of a local campaign committee which can plug the necessity for even more rubber conservation? Get the Chamber of Commerce, the Boy Scouts, the Rotarians, the Elks and all your other community organizations behind you. Split up the city into zones and have these groups co-operate in educating the public to drive slowly, use their cars only when necessary, ride to work together, have their tires checked for wear and wheel alignment. Go after the defense workers as well. They don't have to use their cars every day, just because they're building submarines or howitzers. They can drive each other to work, too - just like the butcher and bread-maker.

Here's a movement that ought to be initiated in your town - if it hasn't been already. And who's better fixed to get it started than your station?

IT'S A MYSTERY TO US **

If you hear any disquieting reports to the effect that the government will shortly ask the removal of news service teletypes from stations, you may be reassured to learn that the BVC has turned the bloodhounds loose on this rumor and finds it about as concrete as a cumulus cloud. The notion seems to have first seen the light of day in Texas but - as is the wont with rumors - may have spread to other parts of the country. If any such talk reaches your ears, please notify the BVC and be careful to let us know who told you and who they quote as their authority.

While we're on the subject of news services, it's understood that everything going out over the wires of both INS and UP these days is supposed to have been properly censored for radio use - unless, of course, it is specifically stated otherwise. The same holds true with the PA process news. But keep your eyes open to be sure the weather does not come into the story.

A SIEVE FOR THE RUMORS **

It seems to us that every station could do a great deal toward the elimination of needless rumor-mongering and willy-nilly undercurrents that rob the war effort of its full momentum. Unfortunately, people who say there's no rubber shortage or that we lack sugar because we've sent it all to Russia are likely to find a wide circle of adherents for their odd beliefs. And that kind of stuff throws sand in the gearbox of national war production.

We propose that the news editor of each station be appointed Chief Rumor Collector. His contacts with local news sources should make him a good man for gathering in all the misshapen, half-baked and/or unfounded

rumors afloat. (We don't mean to imply that every rumor isn't true, however.) Then have him mail or wire these to BVC who will promptly see that OFF has a chance to verify or explode such notions.

In other words, let's say the people in your town begin whispering that a boat has just steamed into such-and-such a port carrying 2,000 bodies and that every effort is being made to conceal their arrival. Rumors like this are dangerous, stubborn, and recurring. The BVC, via the OFF, will try to spike them for you - but fast. And it's your duty to get the true facts on the air equally fast so that morale doesn't get jittery.

THE GENTLEMAN'S RIGHT **

Perhaps we haven't stressed it enough - but it's a matter of such importance that you'll pardon us for becoming wellnigh boring on the subject. The operation of a radio station in these war days is a serious business that requires plenty of caution. We quote an elaboration of our former suggestions, as penned by the program director of an East Coast station:

"From this point on," he writes, "the hiring of radio personnel, especially those who will actually be heard on the air, should be done with the most scrutinizing type of research. References, background, experience, naturalization, etc., should be checked carefully, so that any enemy agents, with an impressive and persuasive manner, may not be granted positions which would give them a medium of transferring information to foreign sources."

Melodramatic, you think? Dime novel stuff? Brother, that's what they thought in Holland, in France, in Hawaii - and in every other place that wasn't careful.

THE OFF'S PRIORITY LIST **

On several occasions mention has been made of a forthcoming priority list for broadcasters - a list evaluating the relative importance, week-by-week, of all appeals, campaigns and drives - to be prepared by the OFF.

Last week we expected it by mid-March. The latest word from the OFF, however, says that organization will not be set up to inaugurate the service until April 1.

CONCERNING STATION VISITORS **

Last August the DCB issued a two-part resolution dealing with who shall and who sha'n't be allowed access to transmitting plants and other radio facilities. All visitors were barred. Confusion seems to have arisen in the minds of some broadcasters as to whether it excludes visitors from studios and station offices.

FCC Chairman Fly has issued a recent statement clarifying this. The restrictions mean that the public is taboo at your transmitter building, around your antenna, in the main control room, in your equipment storeroom and other points of equal technical importance. Studio and office visitors are O.K. except for aliens.

If you haven't seen Chairman Fly's notice, we suggest you write to the BVC and we'll be glad to send you a copy.

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Nos. 1-36. 1942.

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